



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

August 1, 2006

# News Release

## **ICE increases illegal alien detention capacity by 2,000; 500 new beds on line in Willacy County, Texas**

***DHS continues progress to detain all illegal aliens apprehended at the Southwest border***

SAN ANTONIO — Just 40 days after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) signed an Inter-governmental Service Agreement (IGSA) with Willacy County, Texas, to provide secure detention services for detainees, the first 500 beds are open and accepting illegal aliens apprehended at the Southwest border. The move caps a busy July in which ICE increased detention capacity by another 1,500 beds, bringing ICE's national detention capacity to 22,800.

"ICE is not only adding bed space, but using bed space more efficiently to achieve a policy of 'catch and remove' at the Southwest border," said Julie Myers, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "These efforts are part of our comprehensive approach to border security – cutting off the flow of illegal aliens into our nation, and targeting those who are already here for swift removal."

The move represents a significant step forward in the President's plan to ensure that all illegal aliens apprehended along the U.S border with Mexico are detained and returned to their home countries. On Thursday, Secretary Michael Chertoff announced that ICE began detaining 96 percent of all non-Mexican illegal aliens apprehended at the Southwest border; 4 percent were not detained due to the *Orantes* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court or other unique circumstances; no aliens were released due to a lack of bed space.

"Willacy County recognizes that homeland security is a shared mission," said Willacy County Judge Simone Salinas. "We are proud to have been able to bring on these new detention beds in record time, which will result in improved border security not only for county residents but also our nation."

Increasing the number of detention beds is part of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan by the Department of Homeland Security to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. Under SBI, Homeland Security seeks to gain operational control of both the northern and southern borders, while re-engineering the detention and removal system to ensure that illegal aliens are removed from the country quickly and efficiently. SBI also involves strong interior enforcement efforts, including enhanced worksite enforcement investigations and intensified efforts to track down and remove illegal aliens inside the country.

The new beds are the result of an Inter-governmental Service Agreement (IGSA) signed on June 21 between ICE and Willacy County to provide secure detention services for up to 2,000 detainees; the remaining 1,500 beds will be on line by October 1. According to Willacy County officials, Management & Training Corp. (MTC) headquartered in Centerville, Utah, will operate the new Willacy County Detention Center (WCDC); Hale-Mills Construction of Houston was the general contractor. Municipal Capital Markets of Dallas provided Willacy County with financing for the project. With various dorm pods, WCDC will provide separate areas for men and women, and will accommodate up to 2,000 immigration detainees. It will include on-site medical care provided by the U.S. Public Health Service.

## ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*